

January 17, 2008

Puget Sound Photographic Collector's Society, Inc.

Vol. XXIV No. 5

WHAT	NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF PSPCS
WHERE	DES MOINES MASONIC TEMPLE 2208 S. 223rd St. (Take Midway exit #149 west off I-5...go to first stop light west of Pacific Hwy. South...Turn right.)
WHEN	Thursday, January 17th 7:00 p.m. till 10:00 p.m. (doors open about 6:00 p.m.)
WHY	A short business meeting..Auction (one item lot per member please)..Door Prize..Show & Tell..Members' trade and sell tables (free to members, please ignore during business meeting.) <u>Program:</u> Please bring, to show off, all the photographic "treasures" that Santa and his Elves brought you this Christmas Season..or fun items you found without any help from old St. Nick.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO US ALL:

As we begin 2008 our 29th Great Year is already four months old..(due to three teachers who first headed up P.S.P.C.S. back in 1979 and counted each new year as beginning in September with the start of the new school year.) We have had an interesting fall, elected a new secretary, begun planning for our 28th Great Show and had a very enjoyable Christmas meeting with a fun gift exchange presided over by a very well portrayed Santa. (Thanks, Jim); and a delicious spread set fourth by our new secretary, Don Friend, ably assisted by his lovely wife Cherie and Son Don..(known to some of us as the Head Goff.). Thank you all!

Now, it's time to enjoy 2008 as we begin to sign up sellers, and alert buyers, for your 28th Show Experience Weekend coming up faster then you think on Saturday, April 5th. Also, dues are do right now for those of you who have not already paid Treasurer Shirley. But most of all it is time to continue searching for those prized photographic "treasures" and then sharing them with your fellow members as we continue in 2008..at our monthly meetings..to explore the fascinating world of Collecting vintage photographica.

IT' SHOW BROCHURE TIME:

You found your 2008 P.S.P.C.S. Show Brochure when you opened your News Letter. Your Show Committe and registrar Darrel urge you to NOT put it aside..(Oh, I will order a couple of tables later)..**DO IT NOW!!** Please, take the time to order your table(s) while the brochure is in your hot little hands. You know you will want table(s) as the Show date of April 5th approaches; and by ordering now you will be a big help to your Show Committee as they plan for the Show. Darrel is already for your order so take a moment and reserve your tables(s) for our 28th Great Show. We have the biggest, and many feel the best, one day Show in at least the Western United States. With tables only \$40.00 each it is a real bargain for anyone with photographica to sell or trade..and who also want first crack at what the other dealers have to offer on friday evening and early saturday morning. Don't miss out on the thrill of hunting and selling in real time. The joy of being able to "wheel & Deal" with people in the flesh at our once a year Show should not be missed. We look forward to this being our best Show ever. Don't miss the fun..order your talbe(s) now!

With thanks to the Photographic Historical Society here is:

This Month's Mystery Question(s)

Answers at end of Newsletter.

What 1939-1950 bakelite box cameras had a built in flash with reflector?

The special Christmas meeting of the Puget Sound Photographic Collectors Society was called to order at 7:30 p.m. This was after a delicious repast of goodies and sparkling cider set out by secretary Don Friend, ably assisted by his vivacious wife Cherie and their helpful son, Don, had been enjoyed by the 35 members and friends in attendance. Many thanks to Don and his family (Burp!!)

The minutes of the November 15th meeting were approved as read. Treasurer, Shirley, reported that even after her Christmas shopping the Club was still in the black but that the 2008 dues now due from members were needed to keep the Club ahead of the "curve".

OLD BUSINESS , NEW BUSINESS, SHOW & TELL, AUCTION AND DOOR PRIZE:

None of the above were held because this was our special Christmas meeting.

SHOW REPORT:

Chairman, Bill Kimber, reported that, "The Western Washington Fair Pavilion" is to now be referred to as the "Puyallup Fair and Events Center".

The motel meeting rooms we have been using for our friday evening Hospitality room are no longer available; and no other suitable off site venue could be located. Thus, this year, our hosted Hospitality room will be on the fairgrounds in a location yet to be determined.

Bill reminded Show Committee members that the next (2nd) meeting of our 2008 April 5th Show committee will be held at 6 p.m. on January 17th at our regular Club meeting location. Updates by members will be given to fellow committee members and on going problems will be discussed and worked on.

PROGRAM:

About 8 p.m. a hearty HO, HO, HO was heard and in came Santa ready to help in our yearly gift exchange. Everyone had the "thrilling" experience of sitting on Santa's lap as they unwrapped their new photogracia treasurer. The gifts seemed quite nice this year and only a few daring souls took their opportunity to exchange their gift with one already opened. Santa was grand and a fine, fun time, was had by all. The only regret is that more Club members did not find the time to attend this most enjoyable Club holidaze meeting.

Santa left to tend to his many other Christmas duties around nine p.m. and the meeting adjourned for a bit of general clean up, nummie munching and sparkling cider sipping. HO, HO, HO!!!



THE BELLOWS Newsletter is published 10 times per year by Puget Sound Photographic Collector's Society, Inc. Information for **The Bellows** should be send to Bill Kimber, 1413 Weathervane Drive, Tacoma, WA 98466-5712, (253) 564-4046, billkimber@webtv.net

The P.S.P.C.S. internet address is www.pspcs.org

Dues are \$20.00 per year and should be sent to Secretary/Treasurer Shirley Sparrow, 300 Pease Road, Cle Elum, WA 98922, (509) 674-1916, sesparrow9@msn.com P.S.P.C.S. members receive first notification of our yearly April show.

PRESIDENT: DARREL WOMACK (206) 244-6831 DARRELCAM@COMCAST.NET



YES, VIRGINIA DUES ARE DUE:

And that goes for the rest you you too. If you have not already paid Shirley (Her address is at the bottom of the second page.) the time is now. As you know, dues are ONLY \$20.00 per year. For your money you receive: ten copies of The Bellows newsletter, first notice of our yearly Sale, Swap and Show , our happy Christmas feed and gift exchange, a FREE Show display table (a \$40.00 value) our ten monthly meetings complete with nummies and sales tables and a most enjoyable group of fellow collectors from which to glean information and swap tales of the hunt. All this for only \$20.00! Don't let your membership lapse after February. Join us for a another most enjoyable year.

THE COLLECTOR

Mamiya -6 versus Ensign Commando

The category of 6x6 folding cameras is very crowded and includes lots of Zeiss Ikons, Voigtlanders, etc and practically every pre 1940's camera manufacturer there ever was.

Most of them are scale focussing guestimators using front cell movement, but the better ones have rangefinders and their problem is how to couple the lens movement to the rangefinder. The Super Ikontas use a beautiful arrangement of little optical wedges rotating via thumb drive and gears that turn the front element of the Tessar lens. Their rangefinder is in two parts, one on the front lens mount and the other is in the camera body, very elegant, expensive and delicate. Others like the Franka Solida uses a rack and pinion to move the whole lens standard in the front and the rangefinder prism in the camera. On a folding camera such a linkage is prone to wear and variability.

That was the state of the 6x6 folder art in the late 1930's just prior to WWII. In 1940 the Mamiya Camera factory in Japan produced a 6x6 rangefinder folder that focused in a very different way. A knurled wheel was used to move the entire focal plane and to deflect the rangefinder prism at the same time. The linkage was all in one place, not subject to the folding mechanism, and the whole lens assembly remained unmoved and optically stable. This camera was the

Mamiya Six and it had a waist level finder built in next to the eyelevel rangefinder as was common at the time of changeover from the little 'Kodak' style brilliant finders and the more modern

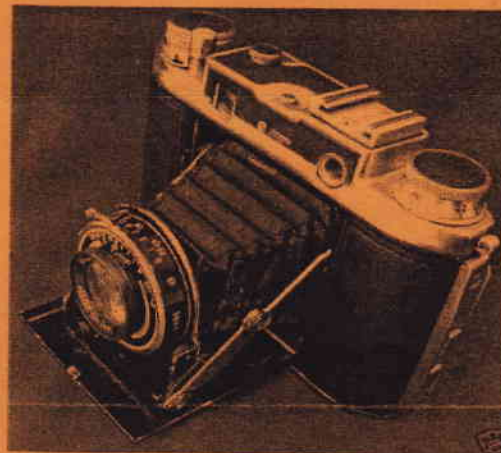
eye level optical finders. The overall construction was not up to Zeiss standards but the simple and rugged coupled rangefinder system made the Mamiya cheaper, and competitive in the 6x6 folder category.

At about the same time on the other side of the world in Britain the Ensign division of Houghton-Butcher was tackling the same problem in a very similar manner. The camera was the Commando and it also moved the film plane back and forth relative to a fixed lens panel. Ensign did not use a knurled thumbwheel but instead a large knob on the top of the camera operated by the left hand. There was no waist level finder because by that time the eye level was accepted

as the way to go. There is some evidence that the Ensign camera was designed to meet a War Office specification for a camera to replace the Zeiss Super Ikonta no longer available due to hostilities, and in fact the first production models were all destined for military use. It is most probable however that the camera was in prototype form at the start of WWII and like everything else it was conscripted to the

war effort. The name Commando was peculiar to the period.

The obvious question asked about these two similar cameras is, 'which one came first?' and then 'who copied who?' The



Japanese supporters of Mamiya point to the 1940 date of the Mamiya Six and compare it to the 1945 date of the Commando. The Ensign supporters claim that their camera was actually designed in 1938 and after service with the military was available for civilian use at the end of the war. And each side is accused of copying the other. My own theory is that each company arrived at a similar solution independently.

Linguistically, culturally, and geographically these two companies were very far apart before the war that started for Japan in 1941 and for Britain in 1939. Theoretically Ensign could have 'liberated' the idea in 1945 but the time to market was just too short. And in those days the Brits did not look to Japan for new ideas.

Another factor is that these two cameras differ in one very essential feature. The Commando moves the film gate back and forth but requires the sprung pressure plate to keep the film in contact with the gate at all times. In the Mamiya Six the film is clamped under a heavy gauge frame that moves with the film gate so that the film and the focal plane are always together independent of springs.

The closest focus on the Commando is 6 feet whereas the nearest focus on the Mamiya is 1 metre. This difference is probably because the extra focus distance required unwieldy pressure plate springs to maintain film flatness in the Commando. At that time almost all rangefinder cameras focused to 3 feet for portrait and candid photographs. Marketing a camera limited to a close focus of 6 feet may have been the cause of the poor public reception for the Commando which was discontinued in 1950. The Mamiya however could easily move the film in the desired range to 3 feet without hindrance and it lasted in production until 1958.

